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FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6935
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHISINAU 000781

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [PBTS](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: FM STRATAN SAYS BALL IS IN ROMANIAN, UKRAINIAN, AND EUROPEAN COURTS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Rudolf V. Perina, for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: At his April 21 meeting with EUR DAS Merkel and CDA Perina, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Andrei Stratan stressed that Moldova had worked hard to make progress with Romania (on border and political treaties and consulates), Ukraine (on power plants and the Danube port), and the EU (on the action plan and reforms). He also noted that Moldova would remain in GUAM, but wanted all members of GUAM to see Economic benefits from membership. End summary.

Border and Political Treaties-"Stalled by Bucharest"

¶2. (C) Responding to DAS Merkel's questions, Stratan stated that Moldova had ceded two points to Romania on the border treaty: Moldova agreed to exclude reference to the 1947 Soviet-imposed agreement, while rethinking the reference to the 1961 agreement, and to use the term "official language" rather than "Moldovan." Stratan said that Romania should respond by accepting the Moldovan title for the treaty ("State Border Agreement between Moldova and Romania"), rather than Bucharest's formulation ("Agreement on the Border Regime"). Stratan said that the argument over the title may simply reflect the fact that Romania does not want to sign. He also noted that Romania, citing domestic elections, wanted to delay negotiations on the political treaty until 2009. Repeating his theme of Romanian responsibility to reciprocate on Moldovan initiatives, Stratan noted that Basescu should meet Voronin in Moldova, just as Voronin met Basescu in Iasi.

Romanian Consulates-Another Ball in Bucharest's Court

¶3. (C) Stratan told us that Moldova is under pressure from Russia to open a consulate general in Tiraspol, and from the Turks to open a consulate in Comrat (in Gagauzia). Nevertheless, he stated, Moldova had agreed to give Romania the first chance to open consulates in Balti and Cahul, in exchange for Moldova's opening consulates in Iasi and Constanta. Despite an exchange of diplomatic notes, he said, there has been no reply from Bucharest, and the Moldovan Ambassador to Romania, despite several meetings with the Romanian MFA, has not received a clear reply. (Comment: In May 2007 Moldova refused a Romanian request to open consulates in Balti and Cahul; at that time, Moldova argued that the Romanian plans were not developed, and that Romania could solve the major problem--long visa queues at the Romanian Embassy in Chisinau--by dropping visa requirements for Moldovan citizens. At the time, Moldovan officials also accused Romania of duplicitously exaggerating the number of Moldovans seeking Romanian citizenship. End comment.)

More Romanian Irritants: NATO Info Center and NATO Liaison

¶4. (C) Stratan also noted that the NATO Information Center in Chisinau, which Romania had used to "promote its own interests," had been relaunched, and he hoped Lithuania would take over Romania's

responsibilities as NATO liaison by December.

Ukraine: Problems with Novodniestrovsk and Giurgiulesti

15. (C) FM indicated that relations with Ukraine were good. Raising the topic of the technical border demarcation, he indicated that difficulties remain. He noted that the proposed visit of Ukraine's President had been postponed because Moldova and Ukraine had not reached a common understanding regarding the Novodniestrovsk hydroelectric plant and the port at Giurgiulesti. Citing environmental concerns regarding downstream effects of potable water for Moldova and Odessa, Stratan said that Moldova had offered to pull down a power plant in Dubosari if the Ukrainians would stop construction at Novodniestrovsk (begun in the Soviet era), as well as retract the request that Moldova cede 17 hectares of land to give Ukraine complete ownership of the Dniester at the site of the plant.

16. (C) Stratan also noted that Ukraine showed little interest in the port of Giurgiulesti (Moldova's only frontage on the Danube and hence its outlet to the Black Sea) until an oil tanker from Azerbaijan made its inaugural visit to the oil terminal recently. With freight and passenger facilities, and a 50-kilometer railroad connection, coming on line soon, Stratan hinted that Ukraine fears port-facility competition with Odessa.

17. (C) Stratan requested our support to keep the European Union Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) stay on, at least until Moldova has a more definite perspective on EU entry. Noting rumors that EUBAM might be shutdown, he praised it as a very effective operation, and said that its very effectiveness "must be disturbing someone." (Note: The EUBAM mandate expires in 2009 and requires Ukrainian concurrence to be renewed.)

Moldova and the EU: We Deserve Better

18. (C) Stratan stated that the EU had put future progress with Moldova on hold, despite Moldova's fulfillment of the 2005 EU Action Plan, and despite hard work on the areas of concern (the judiciary, corruption, and treatment of the mass media). Stratan also noted that Ukraine, Serbia, and Montenegro were getting better treatment than Moldova, and stated clearly that Moldova had performed more actively than Ukraine on EU requirements.) Stratan expressed concern that the EU had initiated a "period of reflection" after informal consultations on July 8, and worried that the EU was planning to sign an agreement only with the next government (which he declared would be inaugurated in May 2009). In fact, Stratan noted, he feared that the summer lull and elections in Europe might extend the wait to the end of 2009. What Moldova needs, he stated, is that the EU establish a five-year vector for European integration now. On a more hopeful note, he stated that, although he had not shared any of these frustrations with Brussels, he hoped to be more active during the French Presidency of the EU, "because we know the French position." Stratan then undid the optimistic tone by declaring that the French position could be the Russian position expressed through France.

19. (C) DAS Merkel encouraged Moldova to remain active in the EU and to increase its contacts in Brussels. Stratan cited Moldova's chairmanship of five regional organizations, and was encouraged by CDA Perina's citation of Moldova's progress with the EU in the last few years on visas and the export regime. Stratan agreed that progress had indeed been made, but that Moldova still needed a political signal from the EU that Moldova would be given a path to European integration.

Moscow: More Waiting in Chisinau

10. (C) Stratan said that Moldova was watching Moscow as Russia resolves its internal debate between those who want a solution to Transnistria, and those who feel that Russia's interests are advanced without a solution. Stratan stated that the situation has been aggravated by Ukraine's attempts to draw closer to NATO. The only real change in the situation, Stratan noted, was that the Russians are no longer confronting Moldova directly on the issue; rather, they had put the Transnistrians between them and the Moldovans.

Recognizing the dangers of a bilateral-only approach with Moscow, Stratan stated that Moldova would not sign the friendship document offered by Smirnov to Voronin in Bender, and that Moldova was keeping the West informed regarding every aspect of the situation.

GUAM: We Are Staying

11. (C) Stratan explained that Moldova was not represented by President or Prime Minister at the GUAM summit because both had "reviewed" the situation and had decided to send Stratan, who could not attend because he was at ECOSOC. Stratan also noted that Moldova had one of its diplomats in Kyiv serving part-time on the GUAM Secretariat because of budget cuts to the Ministry. Despite appearances, Stratan said, Moldova wanted to stay in GUAM, although it wanted GUAM to have a more economic orientation.

12. (U) DAS Merkel cleared this cable.

PERINA